

# Traps

BY CHRISTINE LAN

Gaining their first international support gig was a thrill for Sydney band, Traps, as they had merely been together for ten months. Supporting These New Puritans in their hometown last month was a privilege for the indie four-piece. "It was quite funny because we played that venue three times that week," laughs vocalist and guitarist Kieran Day. "There were obviously quite a lot of people there as well. I had a look around the room and there were scouts everywhere. So it was a little nerve-racking but nevertheless, it was exciting to see all those faces."

And did they converse with the members of the UK quartet? "No, not really - they were kind of a little shy," says Day. "We said hello and they were like 'Hi'. That was about as far as the conversation went." However, lead guitarist Ben Hassell, didn't take to the headliner's *Beat Pyramid* as quickly as most. "He had it on repeat up until the show, and he's like 'man, at first I hated it, but it's just grown on me like *OK Computer*,'" he laughs. "Now, that's a statement!"

The band's most memorable moment to date turns out to be one of their most stressful experiences rather than a fond memory. The band was heading to Brisbane for their support show with Pivot in late July. "We got to Sydney airport and our flight was delayed so we thought we'd go and wait in the bar and come back in half an hour's time. We came back in half an hour's time; the plane had left," Day giggles. "It cost us \$200 to get there and we missed soundcheck so we were all a bit peed off. In the end, it's funny. I guess that's part of being in a band. We probably shouldn't have been in the bar," he laughs.

The formation of Traps began when three of the members met while working together at a multimedia company. "Two years ago, two of us tried to do some electronic stuff but that didn't really work out, because we're not good at electronics," Day laughs. "Ben and myself, we were in other bands at the time, and we had been talking about doing something. We were kind of into different things so we thought if we started collaborating, we might get something interesting out of it. So we asked Mal [Page] the drummer, who we were working with at the time, if he wanted to have a jam. And then Ben got his bass player (Matt Edge) from his other band to come along, and about three jams later, we had about four songs down already. It just kind of worked really well."

"My other band I started when I was about 17," the 22-year-old says, "and I left school and we kept pursuing that. But I kind of gave up on it because the people in the band were a little useless. I've always wanted to pursue music as a career; meeting these new guys has really kind of enlightened it for me. I think it's a little more possible now. They're all really excited and it's really been since I was about 18 when I thought about it as a career."

The band's influences, Day explains, do clash at times, but the fusing of their diverse influences also creates a sound that excites each one of them. "Ben is kind of influenced more by Brit-pop, Blur/Mystery Jets kind of stuff, and I'm more influenced by alternative bands like Arab on Radar and The Chinese Stars and stuff like that," Day reflects. "I'm more into riffs and strange vocal harmonies, and Ben's more into technical guitar."

Earlier this year, the band received significant airplay on radio stations such as FBI and triple j with their demo, which was impressive considering it was recorded in four hours. The band's new single, *Common Errors* (featuring three extra tracks), was recorded over one weekend by Chris Vallejo at Linear Studios in Leichhardt, New South Wales. "We basically said 'we've got two days; we want it to sound raw and live because that's the essence of the band'. We laid four tracks down and luckily, he records everything live," Day enthuses. "He doesn't like doing overdubs and stuff. So we went in there and did three takes of each track. And then we got it mastered (by Oscar Gaona) and it was about a two week process."

"We've been writing a few new songs at the moment that are kind of in the pipeline," informs Day. "We're rehearsing them and the sound has kinda changed a little bit. It's swaying towards being a little heavier, and maybe slightly grungier; stranger guitar riffs with a similar kind of vocal line. Maybe moving away from the poppiness a little bit...as long as we're happy doing what we're doing, I don't want to be a clichéd band. Now that we've started to work together a little more and understand how each of us writes, we have to start experimenting a little bit more."

Having a jazz drummer in the band has contributed strongly to their sound. "We're extremely lucky to have Mal play drums for us," Day asserts, "because he's always been playing jazz and blues, extremely talented and very technical drummer. Ben is just an amazing guitarist and amazing songwriter; a couple of the new songs are very eurythmic guitar solos."

The frontman labels Melbourne as their second home having already played here with previous bands; however, their upcoming show at Roxanne's will be Traps' debut Melbourne gig. "What we try and kind of push is the live energy," Day affirms. "I mean we're not super energetic but we have the rawness and the energy, and well-crafted songs. It's more about people listening to the songs, and the way they've been written. And rather than people coming and being impressed by a bunch of people jumping around, which a lot of punters are, we're more about the music itself."

Catch Traps launching their new single *Common Errors* this Friday September 5 at BATMAN at Roxanne alongside Brisbane band Panther DLX (who are also launching their EP *Into The Night*) and local supports TST and The Rise and Demise. Traps also support Electro indie outfit Flamingo Crash at the Curtin Bandroom this Saturday September 6.



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